



CITES UPDATE #65
September 1998



Dear CITES Cooperator:

We would like to inform you of the following:

NEW CITES SECRETARIAT NOTIFICATIONS: The Office of Management Authority (OMA) recently received CITES Secretariat Notifications to the Parties Nos. 1998/33-1998/47. Listed below are summaries of the Notifications that we feel might be of interest to our CITES cooperators. We would appreciate it if any CITES cooperators who request copies from OMA would please limit their requests to specific Notifications:

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| 1998/35 | <p><u>Greece: Recommendation to Suspend Trade</u></p> <p>Summary: This Notification informs the CITES Parties that the Standing Committee recommends that, due to Greece's inability to implement and enforce CITES, all Parties not issue CITES permits and certificates for trade to Greece and refuse to accept CITES documents issued by Greece from September 1, 1998, until further notice.</p> <p>The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) plans to publish a Notice of Information (NOI) in the <i>Federal Register</i> in the near future announcing that the United States is implementing this recommendation. The Service will allow CITES trade between the United States and Greece to continue until this NOI is published.</p> |
| 1998/36 | <p><u>Export Quotas for 1998</u></p> <p>Summary: This Notification transmits a comprehensive list of Parties' export quotas established for calendar year 1998 for specimens of species included in the CITES Appendices.</p> |
| 1998/37 | <p><u>Illicit Trade in Caviar</u></p> <p>Summary: This Notification reports to the CITES Parties on illicit trade in caviar.</p> |

- 1998/38 Marking of Caviar Exported from Azerbaijan and Kazakstan
Summary: This Notification describes Azerbaijan's and Kazakstan's systems of marking their sturgeon caviar containers for export.
- 1998/39 Marking of Caviar Exported from the Russian Federation
Summary: This Notification transmits copies of caviar documents supplied by the CITES Management Authority of the Russian Federation and describes their system of marking their sturgeon caviar containers for export.
- 1998/40 Control of Trade in Caviar from the United States of America
Summary: This Notification transmits a copy of the U.S. fact sheet about exporting pre-Convention sturgeon and notifies the Parties that the United States will be issuing "multiple-use" certificates for pre-Convention stocks of caviar that was imported before April 1, 1998.
- 1998/41 Scientific Institutions Entitled to the Exemption Provided in Article VII, Paragraph 6, of the Convention
Summary: This Notification transmits a comprehensive list of scientific institutions entitled to the CITES Article VII.6 exemption.
- 1998/42 Control of Operations Breeding Appendix I Species in Captivity
Summary: This Notification lists three operations, one in Canada, one in Indonesia, and one in the United States, to be included in the Register of Operations that Breed Specimens of Species Included in Appendix I in Captivity for Commercial Purposes.
- The operation in the United States is Sky-Out Falcons, a facility with gyrfalcons (*Falco rusticolus*) and peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*), owned and operated by David H. Jamieson of Reno, Nevada. It is the first operation in the United States to be included in the Register.
- 1998/44 Illegal Killing of Elephants
Summary: This Notification notifies the Parties that the Secretariat is in the process of verifying three separate reports it has been informed of regarding illegal killings of 20 African elephants in Kenya during 1997-1998.
- 1998/45 Communication with Traders
Summary: This Notification asks for the cooperation of the CITES Parties to discourage traders from communicating with the Secretariat regarding the issuance or validity of any permit. It is the policy of the Secretariat not to discuss these matters with traders.

1998/46

Transmission of Documents

Summary: This Notification includes, among various materials, a corrected version of CITES Notification No. 1998/26 (Control of Operations Artificially Propagating Specimens of Appendix I Species); a copy of the IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions; and the summary reports of the 37th, 38th, and 40th meetings of the CITES Standing Committee.

1998/47

CITES Newsletter

Summary: This Notification includes a copy of issue number 1 of the CITES newsletter. This publication will be produced by the CITES Secretariat on a twice-yearly basis.

Copies of the newsletter are available upon request from OMA.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON RESOLUTIONS AND

AGENDA ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AT COP11: On September 4, 1998, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) published a scoping notice in the *Federal Register* (63 FR 47316) soliciting recommendations for resolutions and agenda items for discussion at the 11th regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP11). The notice also invites comments on the issue of transborder movements of live animals for exhibition and the issue of the use of product annotations in the CITES Appendices. The Service will consider all information and comments received by November 3, 1998.

This is the second in a series of *Federal Register* notices which, together with announced public meetings, provide an opportunity for the public to participate in the development of the United States' negotiating positions for COP11. A copy of this notice is enclosed for your information.

NOTICE ON REVIEW OF CURRENT PERMITTING PROGRAMS: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is responsible for the implementation of a number of wildlife laws and treaties, including CITES, the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Lacey Act, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Wild Bird Conservation Act, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Each of these laws or treaties provides for permits to be issued for otherwise prohibited activities under specific circumstances. The Service is currently in the process of reviewing its current permitting programs to develop a policy for the use of permits as conservation tools.

On August 10, 1998, the Service published a scoping notice in the *Federal Register* (63 FR 42639) soliciting information and comments from all interested parties on development of a policy that would approach permits as a conservation tool and provide a more efficient permit process that is consistently implemented Service-wide, with a focus on scientific research and scientific and conservation institutions that meet certain standards. Information and comments should be sent to OMA.

The Service will consider all information and comments received by September 24, 1998, and will publish any draft policy developed as a result of this review in the *Federal Register* for public review and comment. A copy of this notice is enclosed for your information.

NEW PANDA CONSERVATION POLICY: On August 27, 1998, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) published a notice in the *Federal Register* (63 FR 45839) announcing a new policy on the issuance of permits for the import of live giant pandas (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*) to clarify what information the Service considers in making the permit findings under CITES and the U.S. Endangered Species Act and to assist persons in filing a complete application. The policy is intended to complement, and not to replace, the current permit procedures and issuance criteria in the regulations. The goal of the new policy is that all imports of pandas directly benefit panda conservation through a coordinated effort that supports China's National Plan, National Survey, or Captive Breeding Plan.

Based on current information on the status of pandas and their habitat, the policy emphasizes research and captive-breeding activities needed to ensure that the captive population becomes self-sustaining and to recover panda populations in the wild. Thus, all monies used in a loan agreement or raised as a result of a panda import should fund giant panda conservation efforts, with a significant portion being used for priority in-situ conservation projects in China. Display of a panda would be allowed as an ancillary component that would not interfere with the research or captive-breeding activities. It is unlikely that the Service would be able to make the necessary findings to issue a permit to import pandas removed from the wild after December 31, 1996.

The policy also addresses the transfer of live pandas within the United States and the import or export of tissue samples. It supersedes previous policy. It became effective on August 27, 1998, the date of publication of the notice. Also effective that date, the suspension of the review and processing of permit applications to import giant pandas was lifted.

Copies of the notice are available upon request from OMA. The notice is also available on our Internet web site. Our Internet address is <http://www.fws.gov/r9dia/index.html>.

Enclosed for your information is a news release issued by the Service on August 26, 1998, entitled "Fish and Wildlife Service Director Announces: New Panda Conservation Policy, Lifts Import Permit Processing Moratorium." This news release announces the Service's new panda policy.

CAPTIVE-BRED WILDLIFE REGULATION PUBLISHED: On September 11, 1998, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) published a final rule in the *Federal Register* (63 FR 48634) amending sections of Federal regulations 50 CFR 17 regarding captive-bred wildlife. The final rule amends the definition of "harass" in 50 CFR 17.3 applied captive-bred wildlife to exclude generally accepted animal husbandry practices that are not likely to result in injury to the animal. The rule deletes the requirement to obtain a Captive-bred Wildlife (CBW) registration for eight species of pheasants, parakeets of the species *Neophema*

splendida and *Neophema pulchella*, the Laysan duck, and the “generic” or inter-subspecific crossed tiger. The final rule will be followed in the future by a new proposed rule that will set forth proposed criteria for addition to, or deletion from, the list of taxa exempted from registration requirements; and will further consider the subject of education.

This rule becomes effective on October 13, 1998. Copies available upon request from OMA.

WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSED RULE ON HUMANE AND HEALTHFUL TRANSPORT OF REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS: On August 26, 1998, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) published, in the *Federal Register* (63 FR 45444), a withdrawal of its June 6, 1997, proposed rule to amend 50 CFR Part 14, Subpart J, pertaining to the establishment of standards for the humane and healthful transport of live reptiles and amphibians to the United States. The Service published this withdrawal in part to allow for the completion of the current revision process of the Live Animals Regulations (LAR) of the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The Service wants to explore all possible opportunities to align U.S. humane and healthful transport regulations with the IATA LAR standards, which have generally been adopted by the international community, including CITES and the European Community, as their required humane transport standards.

A copy of this withdrawal is enclosed for your information.

U.S. RESPONDS TO NOTIFICATION ON MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES: In early May 1998, OMA received CITES Notification No. 1998/18 from the Secretariat. This Notification asked that Parties submit comments to the Secretariat on any problems encountered in the practical and procedural arrangements at past meetings of the Conference of the Parties and suggestions for improvements. On August 14, 1998, OMA submitted the United States’ response to this Notification, which included recommendations for improvements in the practical and procedural arrangements for future Conferences of the Parties.

Copies of the United States’ response are available upon request from OMA.

TWO ARRESTED FOR TAKING EELS ILLEGALLY: On June 17, 1998, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued the following news release:

NEWS RELEASE

TWO ARRESTED FOR TAKING EELS ILLEGALLY

Two men have been arrested in the first federal case dealing with the illegal take of juvenile American eels, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia Helen F. Fahey announced today. State and federal law enforcement agents have been working together for nearly two years gathering evidence to stop the illegal fishery, and they promised this would be only the first in a series of crackdowns, she said.

Seong Woon Chang, age 49, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, and Sterling N. Schuetz, age 35, of Raleigh, North Carolina, are charged with conspiring in February and March of 1996 to violate the Lacey Act, which prohibits the sale or purchase of fish or wildlife that have been taken, transported or sold in violation of state law. The indictment was returned by a federal grand jury sitting in Norfolk, Virginia.

Chang and Schuetz allegedly purchased young eels, called elvers or glass eels, illegally caught in Suffolk, Virginia, Fahey said. Chang allegedly also purchased illegal elvers in Windsor, Virginia, in February 1997. Since 1977, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission has enacted regulations making it unlawful to catch or take elvers. Only four states -- Maine, Connecticut, South Carolina and Florida -- have legal fisheries for elvers measuring 6 inches or less.

"The illegal elver fishery is widespread all along the Atlantic coast from Maine to the Carolinas," according to Ronald E. Lambertson, regional director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Northeast Region based in Hadley, Mass. "The Service is working closely with all of these states to stop the illegal fishery."

"The people who illegally take elvers have a gold rush mentality," Lambertson said. "They are non-traditional fishermen."

Lambertson cited numbers illustrating the huge potential profit in illegal take of elvers, which are less than 6 inches in length: 2,500 elvers weigh one pound. Sold in Asian markets, one pound will bring \$300 or more.

"Eels are a traditional food source for many people in Europe and Asia," according to Lambertson. "Those eel populations have been decimated, so American eels taken legally are filling the void. Proper management and aggressive law enforcement of illegal take will ensure that the American eel will not follow the path of Asian and European eels."

Eels reach sexual maturity at age 8, and they can live in excess of 20 years. Because of this, it could take several years to determine if the American eel as a species was in trouble.

"The American eel fishery is part of this country's fishing heritage," Lambertson said. "They play a major role in the food chain. For instance, striped bass -- a significant game fish -- feed on elvers. Wildlife conservation ensures that renewable resources are available for future generations, but resource conservation or the future of the fishery does not concern those who break wildlife laws."

The federal investigation was begun in the Eastern District of Virginia last year by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service following several arrests by state authorities of fishermen from New Jersey and Maine who were fishing for elvers in Suffolk, Fahey said.

If convicted, Chang faces a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment and a \$1 million fine. Schuetz faces a maximum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a \$500,000 fine. Assistant U.S. Attorney Harvey Bryant is prosecuting the case.

JAPANESE-OWNED SHELL COMPANY PAYS RESTITUTION FOR ILLEGALLY BUYING AND TRANSPORTING FRESHWATER MUSSELS OVERSEAS: On July 24, 1998, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued the following news release:

NEWS RELEASE

JAPANESE-OWNED TENNESSEE SHELL COMPANY PAYS \$1 MILLION IN RESTITUTION FOR ILLEGALLY BUYING AND TRANSPORTING OVERSEAS THOUSANDS OF POUNDS OF FRESHWATER MUSSELS, ONE OF THE UNITED STATES' MOST VALUABLE AND LEAST UNDERSTOOD WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Veronica F. Coleman, United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee; H. Dale Hall, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Acting Regional Director; and Gary Meyers, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Executive Director, announced today that the Camden, Tennessee-based, Japanese-owned Tennessee Shell Company pled guilty to a felony in U.S. District Court in Jackson, Tennessee, and will pay \$1 million in restitution for purchasing thousands of pounds of illegally taken freshwater mussels from rivers in Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia. This is the largest amount of restitution ever paid as a result of a federal criminal investigation into the illegal commercial exploitation of wildlife resources. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service special agents, state wildlife officers, and the Department of Justice made the case after a 4-year investigation into the company's multi-million dollar trade activities.

The largest shell buying/exporting company in the United States and a subsidiary of Kogen Trading Company, Ltd., of Tokyo, Japan, Tennessee Shell Company pled guilty to one felony Lacey Act count. The federal Lacey Act prohibits interstate commerce in wildlife protected under state or federal law and thereby enables federal law enforcement officers to assist states in protecting their wildlife resources.

According to Ms. Coleman, the Tennessee Shell Company purchased the large and valuable mussels from independent buyers and divers, with the full knowledge that they had been taken from waters where state law prohibited their harvest. "What this case boils down to is the plundering of America's wildlife, for profit," said Ms. Coleman.

"While freshwater mussels are not cuddly creatures with eyelashes, they are hugely important in the biological scheme of things," said Acting Regional Director Hall. "They are the proverbial 'canaries in the coal mine,' warning us of danger by detecting and filtering out pollutants and toxic chemicals in the water that may affect human health. They are also a food source for other animals and an anchor for plants on the riverbed. But they are being wiped out as a result of human activities, and, in this case, because of greed," he said.

"As commercial quantities of shells became scarce in legal areas of the South, prices soared from \$2-3 to as much as \$13 per pound at the time of this investigation," said Director Myers. "Tennessee Shell and its suppliers began looking for any source of shells, legal or otherwise, which led them to the protected mussel beds. Today, however, the company is paying a high price for its illegal activities," he said.

A Federal Grand Jury in Jackson, Tennessee, has indicted 20 individuals for 136 counts of violating the Lacey Act, with regard to fresh water mussels. To date, 19 defendants have pled guilty, and one has entered a pretrial diversion agreement in U.S. District Court in Jackson, resulting in a total of nearly \$67,000 in restitution ordered to be paid to the State of Michigan (from whose waters many of the mussels were harvested), along with prison sentences and periods of supervised release or probation for these individuals.

The \$1 million in restitution from Tennessee Shell will be paid to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to establish the Freshwater Mussel Conservation Fund for mussel research and recovery. "This is an important event in the annals of wildlife conservation history because it ultimately returns a significant amount of money to wildlife agencies to work on the task of protecting and restoring the exploited species," said the Foundation's Director of Conservation Programs, Whitney Tilt. The Foundation is an organization established by Congress to assist the Fish and Wildlife Service and others in raising funds for wildlife conservation.

Special agents of the Fish and Wildlife Service worked with state officers in Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, Alabama and Louisiana, to follow the trail of evidence from the Ohio, Muskingum, Green and Grand rivers to the company's headquarters in Camden, Tennessee, and from there through West Coast ports to Japan. Mr. Hall expressed particular gratitude to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources for their assistance in making this case. "This case might never have come to prosecution without their help," he said.

According to Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agent David Cartwright, who led the investigation, tracking the criminals' paper trail to gather evidence was an exhausting, time-consuming process.

"Making the case involved analyzing 200,000 documents seized from Tennessee Shell Company, reviewing records, conducting interviews, and developing witnesses. Through this effort, we were successful in gathering overwhelming evidence against Tennessee Shell Company," said Cartwright.

Cartwright said the stolen shells were shipped to Tennessee Shell, where they were mixed with shells from legal sources, loaded into sacks, placed in 22-ton freight containers and exported to Japan by way of West Coast ports, including Los Angeles. Records recovered during the investigation revealed a \$50 million annual domestic business for shell companies

in the United States and a \$5 billion annual foreign trade to meet the demands for pearls, fine jewelry and other products.

Director Myers pointed out that shelling can be and is done legally, including by Tennessee Shell Company, and provides jobs and livelihoods for about 10,000 people, primarily in the Mississippi River Basin.

Freshwater mussels are one of the most endangered families of wildlife in America. While found on every continent except Antarctica, freshwater mussels are most diverse in the Mississippi and Ohio River drainages of the United States. Of the approximately 300 known species of mussels, 30 are extinct and another 70 are listed as threatened or endangered. An estimated 70 percent of the nation's mussels are at risk from a variety of threats, reflecting an unparalleled level of collapse of a family of wildlife. Human-induced habitat loss is considered the major reason for the collapse.

State conservation agencies and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists became alarmed at the loss of the mussel resources from poaching in recent years and requested that special agents of the Service's Division of Law Enforcement get involved to help them stem the interstate and international illegal trade.

Due to their larger size and greater thickness, shells of mussels from the South and Midwest are in great demand in the Orient. Most of the shells end up in Japan, where shell pieces are rounded into beads and implanted into live oysters. The bead is an irritant to the oyster and, in defense, the oyster secretes "nacre," a pearly substance, around the bead. After 2-3 years, a cultured freshwater pearl is formed. The larger the original bead, the larger the resultant pearl.

In the United States, the industry is primarily based along the Mississippi River drainage, with the largest companies predominantly located in Tennessee.

The joint federal and state investigations involved U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service special agents east of the Mississippi River; state wildlife officers from Tennessee, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, Alabama and Louisiana; and assistant United States Attorneys from Tennessee, Michigan and Illinois. Supervisory Assistant U.S. Attorney Len Register, United States Attorney's Office, Western District of Tennessee, Eastern Division, Jackson, led the prosecution. Special agents Carl Wilson (Grand Rapids, Michigan) and Andy Pierce (Columbus, Ohio) supported the investigation.

U.S. REPTILE DEALER FACES WILDLIFE SMUGGLING AND CONSPIRACY CHARGES:

On August 7, 1998, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued the following news release:

NEWS RELEASE

U.S. REPTILE DEALER FACES WILDLIFE SMUGGLING AND CONSPIRACY CHARGES

A 5-year investigation by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service special agents of illegal international trade in reptiles resulted in the August 6 arrest of Tommy Edward Crutchfield. Crutchfield, a U.S. reptile dealer, is charged with wildlife smuggling, conspiracy, and money laundering. He is the 18th person charged to date in this wide-reaching case involving wildlife trafficking that spans six continents.

Crutchfield was apprehended by Federal authorities in Miami as he returned to the United States after being expelled from Belize. The former Florida businessman has spent the last 5 months in jail in Belize fighting that country's February 28 expulsion order. He now faces U.S. charges based on his alleged involvement in a major international reptile smuggling ring.

Last October, a Federal grand jury in Orlando, Florida, returned a multi-count indictment against Crutchfield, his wife, two former employees, and two other individuals based on the Service's ongoing scrutiny of the highly lucrative black market reptile trade. The indictment alleges that the six were part of an international smuggling ring that is believed to have brought hundreds of rare and endangered snakes and tortoises out of Madagascar into Germany. From there, the animals, worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, were smuggled into the United States and Canada where they were sold to wildlife dealers and private collectors. Protected reptiles from Australia, Indonesia, and various South American and Caribbean countries were also traded.

The smuggled reptiles, which were typically concealed in suitcases and transported aboard commercial airline flights, include highly prized Madagascar tree and ground boas, radiated tortoises, and spider tortoises- species that occur naturally only in Madagascar, an island off the southeastern coast of Africa. These animals, and the other reptiles allegedly smuggled, purchased, and sold, are protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)- a global agreement that regulates world wildlife trade.

Crutchfield, who was named in all 10 counts of the indictment returned by the grand jury in October, is charged with multiple offenses of smuggling, violations of the Lacey Act (a Federal statute that allows the United States to prosecute individuals for violating international wildlife protection laws, including CITES), conspiracy, and money laundering.

If found guilty, Crutchfield could be sentenced to up to 5 years in prison and fined as much as \$250,000 on each smuggling and Lacey Act count. Conviction on the money laundering charges could result in prison terms of up to 20 years and penalties as high as \$500,000 per count.

Crutchfield, formerly the president of Tom Crutchfield's Reptile Enterprises, Inc., located in Lake Panasoffkee, Florida, was generally considered one of the largest reptile importer/exporters in the United States before he left the country in the spring of 1997. He

was on supervised release following completion of a 5-month prison sentence for a 1995 conviction for smuggling endangered Fiji Island iguanas when he fled to Belize after being notified by the Justice Department that he was under investigation. He also faces potential penalties for violating the supervised release.

The reptile investigation has already produced significant results, according to Service law enforcement officials. In addition to the charges against Crutchfield and his associates, four individuals from Germany, South Africa, Canada, and Japan have been arrested and successfully prosecuted in the United States. Of these, German citizen Wolfgang Michael Kloe received the stiffest sentence --a \$10,000 fine and 46-month prison term-- after pleading guilty to six counts including conspiracy, smuggling, money laundering, attempted escape, and Lacey Act violations. Three other Germans charged in the case remain at large.

The Service's investigation of the illegal reptile trade has also led to charges in the United States against three Florida residents and a European for dealing in reptiles. One of the Florida residents, Matthew Lerer, was sentenced June 25 to 6 months electronically monitored home detention, 100 hours of community service, and 3 years' probation. Friedrich Karl Artur Postma of The Netherlands, who was stopped at Orlando International Airport last August when he tried to smuggle in 13 radiated tortoises stuffed inside 5 socks, was sentenced to 1 year in jail and a \$3,000 fine.

In addition to these charges in the U.S., authorities in Germany and Canada have taken legal action against two Germans, a South African, and a Canadian for their involvement in illegal reptile trade.

"As the world's largest importer of wildlife, the United States has a special responsibility to prevent the illegal exploitation of all imperiled species," Service Director Jamie Clark said. "The record of indictments, arrests, and prosecutions for reptile smuggling from the past 2 years shows that the Service, the Department of Justice, and many of our international counterparts are committed to finding and stopping those who try to profit from protected wildlife. I would like to thank law enforcement authorities in Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, and now Belize for their assistance in and support of this investigation.

"This case should send a clear message to those who traffic in rare and endangered reptiles that profiteering at the expense of wildlife will not be tolerated by the United States or by the world community."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service's nearly 93 million acres include 514 national wildlife refuges, 78 ecological services field stations, 66 national fish hatcheries, 50 wildlife coordination areas, and 38 wetland management districts with waterfowl production areas.

The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes Federal excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies. This program is a cornerstone of the Nation's wildlife management efforts, funding fish and wildlife restoration, boating access, hunter education, shooting ranges, and related projects across America.

FAXBACK RETRIEVAL SYSTEM NOW ACTIVE: On August 19, 1998, OMA activated its Faxback Retrieval System. This system allows a person to obtain various informational documents and fact sheets from OMA automatically by telephone and fax machine, or by access to our Internet web site. Callers within the United States can access the system by dialing 1-800-770-0150 on a telephone or 703-358-2348 on a fax machine. Those with access to the Internet can visit our web site and download the information they seek. Our Internet address is <http://www.fws.gov/r9dia/index.html>.

Information available over the Faxback Retrieval System includes permit application packages, CITES Management and Scientific Authority addresses, CITES resolutions, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regional and port office addresses, regulations, and various fact sheets. Enclosed is an index to the available information. The index also includes instructions on how to order information over the system.

ROSEMARIE GNAM SELECTED AS CHIEF OF OMA'S BRANCH OF CITES

OPERATIONS: It is with great pleasure that we announce that Rosemarie Gnam has been selected as Chief of OMA's Branch of CITES Operations. Dr. Gnam is an extremely knowledgeable, dedicated, and hard-working colleague. Her experience, background, and expertise in CITES and law enforcement have prepared her well to assume the responsibilities of this position. Dr. Gnam's appointment was effective August 3, 1998. She can be reached at OMA's mailing address (tel: 703-358-2095; fax: 703-358-2298; E-mail: rosemarie_gnam@mail.fws.gov).

Sincerely,

Teiko Saito, Chief
Office of Management Authority

Dr. Susan S. Lieberman, Chief
Office of Scientific Authority

Enclosures

All documents referred to above are available on request from either the Office of Management Authority (OMA) or the Office of Scientific Authority (OSA). Address correspondence to OMA to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 700, Arlington, Virginia 22203 (tel: 703-358-2095; fax: 703-358-2298; E-mail: r9oma_cites@mail.fws.gov). Address correspondence to OSA to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 750, Arlington, Virginia 22203 (tel: 703-358-1708; fax: 703-358-2276; E-mail: r9osa@mail.fws.gov).